

SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT 2020

Scrutiny on Crime within Stone Town

Safer Neighbourhood Panel	<p>STAFFORD SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL</p> <p>The following panel members undertook the scrutiny:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tim Handley - Richard Scholes
Working Title:	Review of Crime within Stone Town 2019
Reason for enquiry:	<p>To examine the effects of a period of action taken specifically in Stone to address town centre crime issues. There was a relatively significant increase in reported crime in the Stone area (25% in February and 22% in May 2019) highlighted by the NPT commander. Of particular concern were increases in burglary, drugs abuse and online sexual offences (e.g. 'sexting').</p>
Background	<p>Chief Inspector Gemma Ward recommended that we look at these issues and their resolution as an example of proactive policing.</p>
Review of Findings:	<p>The scrutiny team members met with Mike Court to establish the Terms of Reference below, which were subsequently agreed by the SCO.</p> <p>To examine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How, and when, the LPT recognised that Stone was experiencing an increase in reported incidents? - What objectives were set, and what plan was put in place? - What action was taken? Was this in line with operating procedures? - What the results were? - What the on-going strategy/plan is? <p>through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviewing relevant data for the period concerned, - engaging with local policing lead to understand specific matters, - engaging, as necessary, with local community groups. <p>They firstly reviewed the data.</p>



Tim Handley met the Stone Town Council Clerk, Les Trigg, on 14 November 2019 with the aim of getting involvement from councillors. At the Town Council meeting on 3 December, the following minute was recorded:-

Stafford Safer Neighbourhood Panel

The Committee considered the appointment of Councillors to provide input into a scrutiny review being undertaken by the Stafford Safer Neighbourhood Panel. The terms of reference of the review had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. No Councillors were nominated and no volunteers came forward to take on the task.

The members went on to see Ed Stant and Susan Hughes from the Stone Traders Group on 29 January 2020. While the discussion was interesting, they had not noticed a decrease in crime levels and were concerned that the levels of petty theft, loitering, and drug taking remained at unchanged level. Lack of enforcement of the pedestrian area was also seen as a rising problem with drivers driving and parking in the pedestrian area.

Tim Handley tried on several occasions to contact Sergeant Hazel Hunt to pursue the discussion but despite several emails, could not arrange a meeting. She has moved to a different role, as had Gemma Ward.

The scrutiny was overtaken by the lockdown so after discussion with Mike Court and then the panel, the scrutiny was abandoned.

Conclusions:

Whilst there was evidence of a spike in specific issues during the period in question and no recurrence it was not possible to establish what action the neighbourhood police team had taken to resolve these issues. This was largely as a result of a combination of Covid lockdown, inability to contact the local police sergeant and both this officer and CI Gemma Ward moving roles.

Recommendations:

1. The STG feedback should be shared with the new NPT Commander – CI Giles Parsons. Action: T Handley
2. CI Giles Parsons and his team should build an effective relationship with the Stone Traders Group and other community representatives or interested third parties. Action: CI Giles Parsons

**NPT Commander
Report Feedback:**

Thank you for the report & apologies it has been a frustrating experiencing.

As you should be aware Sgt Nick Maingay is now lead for Stone issues. We have experienced issues this year in Stone in relation to drugs, acquisitive crime & anti – social behaviour. These were identified through processes in place on the NPT.



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Significant action has been taken in terms of arrests for acquisitive crime, warrants, drugs arrests & action around ASB. This has included bolstering CCTV in the area & use of a closure order at an address causing significant ASB issues.

Significant engagement has taken place with Councillors, community representatives & residents to ensure we fully understand community concerns, gather intelligence from them & maintain their confidence. This engagement & our focus will continue.

SCO Response:

It is unfortunate that the impact of Covid affected this scrutiny. Perhaps it may be further reviewed when Covid restrictions are lifted to see what impact the measures now put in place have had.